

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 /092 W
-----017507 290838Z /21

P R 290745Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9286
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU
CINCEUR VAINGEN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 9431

CINCPAC AND CINCEUR ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT SHUM PK
SUBJECT: ELECTIONS PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY, BUT OCTOBER 1979 IS
EARLIEST THEY COULD BE HELD

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 9278 (NOTAL) B. ISLAMABAD 9319 (NOTAL)
C. ISLAMABAD A-99 (NOTAL)

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1. THIS WEEK'S CHANGES IN PAKISTAN'S ELECTION LAWS, WHICH WERE
AIMED AT AUTHORIZING THE CREATION OF SEPARATE CONSTITUENCIES FOR
NON-MUSLIM MINORITIES (REFTELS), HAVE BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY DECISIONS
TO UNDERTAKE A NEW ENROLLMENT OF VOTERS AND TO RE-EXAMINE EXISTING
CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES TO REMEDY BHUTTO-ERA INEQUITIES AND
GERRYMANDERING.

2. THE ELECTION COMMISSION HAS SUBSEQUENTLY TAKEN THE FIRST STEPS TO IMPLEMENT THESE DECISIONS BY APPOINTING MORE THAN 1000 OFFICERS AT THE DISTRICT AND DIVISIONAL LEVEL AND BELOW TO ACT AS REGISTRATION AND ASSISTANT REGISTRATION OFFICERS. THESE OFFICIALS WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPERVISING THE MORE THAN 28,000 ENUMERATORS WHO WILL ACTUALLY DO THE CANVASSING REQUIRED IN EACH VILLAGE AND VALLEY TO PREPARE, REVISE, CORRECT, AND ASSEMBLE THE NEW VOTER ROLLS.

3. THE PREPARATORY PROCESS THUS BEGUN COULD PUT PRESIDENT ZIA-UL-HAQ IN A POSITION TO ANNOUNCE NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS BY THE MIDDLE OF NEXT YEAR AND TO ACTUALLY HOLD THEM BY AROUND MID-OCTOBER. ELECTIONS ANY EARLIER THAN THEN WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE, GIVEN THE SHEER MAGNITUDE OF THE COMMISSION'S WORKLOAD MADE NECESSARY BY THE DECISION TO UNDERTAKE A NEW VOTER ENUMERATION. THIS IS THE CONCLUSION POLCOUNS HAS DRAWN FOLLOWING AN HOUR-LONG DISCUSSION OF ELECTORAL LAW, PRACTICE, AND PREPARATION WITH A.Z. FAROOQI, SECRETARY OF THE ELECTIONS COMMISSION AND THE OFFICIAL CHARGED WITH DAY-TO-DAY OVERSIGHT OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS. FAROOQI'S SCENARIO TENDS ALSO TO SUPPORT AND BE CONSISTENT WITH MOST INFORMED SPECULATION IN PAKISTAN ON THE POSSIBLE TIMING OF ELECTIONS

4. THE FOREGOING SUMMARIZES AN AIRGRAM (REFAIR) WHICH
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DESCRIBES IN DETAIL THE VARIOUS STAGES OF THE PREPARATORY PROCESS OUTLINED BY FAROOQI AND ANALYZES THE MEANING OF THE PROCESS IN TERMS OF ELECTION TIMING. REPAIR WAS POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT ON 28 SEPTEMBER AND WILL ALSO BE POUCHED TO MOST ADDRESSEES THIS CABLE. CONSTABLE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ISLAMA09431
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780397-0575
Format: TEL
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978097/aaaaafgn.tel
Line Count: 99
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e183b350-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 ISLAMABAD 9278, 78 ISLAMABAD 9319, 78 ISLAMABAD A-99
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1443908
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ELECTIONS PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY, BUT OCTOBER 1979 IS EARLIEST THEY COULD BE HELD
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, PK
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e183b350-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014